STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Mentone Primary School on 9583 2995 or mentone.ps@education.vic.gov.au

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students and members of our school community understand:

    (a) our commitment to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for students

    (b) expectations for positive student behaviour

    (c) support available to students and families

    (d) our school's policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

Mentone Primary School is committed to providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment for all students. We understand that students reach their full potential only when they are happy, healthy and safe, and that a positive school culture where student participation is encouraged and valued, helps to engage students and support them in their learning. Our school acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are closely linked.

The objective of this policy is to support our school to create and maintain a safe, supportive and inclusive school environment consistent with our school's values.

SCOPE
This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions.

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POLICY

1. School profile

Mentone Primary School is situated in the residential beachside suburb of Mentone in the local government area of the City of Kingston on Bunurong Country. Mentone PS has been educating local

children since 1889 and with 135 years of serving the local community's learning needs, we have developed a strong sense of tradition and values. 'Mentone Primary School aspires to foster a vibrant community where every student thrives academically, socially and emotionally. By nurturing meaningful connections that embrace the rich diversity of our students' cultural backgrounds, individual needs and unique abilities, we aim to empower them with the knowledge, skills and dispositions to shape the world around them.'

At Mentone PS we provide students with a broad range of excellent learning programs designed, developed and evaluated consistently by leadership and the staff professional learning teams within the school. All staff work collectively and collaboratively in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to design, develop and refine exciting and flexible learning experiences. These learning experiences are created to meet individual needs and challenge all students.

We have a diverse range of Literacy and Numeracy programs supporting the improvement of individual student's levels of achievement, alongside quality learning programs delivered through an integrated and inquiry approach to learning in all other curriculum areas. The school curriculum is further enhanced through specialist programs consisting of Auslan, Library, Physical Education, STEM and Visual Arts. In addition, the school has a strong focus on sustainability and student leadership enabling students to become environmentally aware and socially competent. We have a strong commitment to the development and integration of technologies across the school curriculum providing excellent access at every level to flexible use of devices to complement learning programs.

Mentone Primary School proudly promotes an inclusive learning environment. We have a number of students with a Disability Inclusion Profile (Tier 3), who are well supported by a collaborative team of teachers and education support staff. Tier 2 funding ensures students with additional needs are catered for through a variety of targeted interventions.

Our school also provides students with a comprehensive outdoor education program from Year 3 through to Year 6; inclusive of camps and interschool competitions. Our student leadership program includes PLAY leaders, student leaders and four school captains.

Mentone Primary School's out of school hours care provider is Team Kids - a leader in the area of Before and After School Care, and Holiday Programs. Our students benefit from a Breakfast Club which operates in conjunction with Food Bank.

Our school is compliant with the Child Safe Standards and promotes the safety, wellbeing and inclusion of all children. A high level of community spirit exists at Mentone Primary School.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

At Mentone Primary School our agreed values include being Respectful, being Honest, being a Team Player, being Friendly and being Caring.

Our mission is to encourage students to strive for personal excellence in a school community that values growth mindset and acknowledges that learning is an active partnership between all involved.

The school motto "Learning Today for Tomorrow" acknowledges that we are collectively committed to this mission in the knowledge that our students will take their skills and knowledge with them into the future to become inclusive, valuable, resourceful, contributing members of society.

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Mentone Primary School has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, an inclusive and safe environment, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students in our school. We recognise the importance of student friendships and peer support in helping children and students feel safe and less isolated. We acknowledge that some students may need extra social, emotional or educational support at school, and that the needs of students will change over time as they grow and learn.

A summary of the universal (whole of school), targeted (year group specific) and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

Universal

- Clear Behavioural Expectations: Implementation of school-wide behaviour signage, classroom Codes of Cooperation, and the *Mentone PS Behaviour Matrix* ensure a consistent understanding of expected behaviours. Compass Chronicle categories now align with the matrix to support consistent behaviour documentation and analysis.
- prioritise positive relationships between staff and students, recognising the fundamental role this plays in building and sustaining student wellbeing
- creating a culture that is inclusive, engaging and supportive and that embraces and celebrates diversity and empowers all students to participate and feel valued
- welcoming all parents/carers and being responsive to them as partners in learning
- analysing and being responsive to a range of school data such as attendance, Attitudes to School Survey, parent survey data, student management data and school level assessment data
- teachers at Mentone Primary School adopt a broad range of teaching and assessment approaches to effectively respond to the diverse learning styles, strengths and needs of our students and follow the standards set by the Victorian Institute of Teaching
- carefully planned transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling
- positive behaviour and student achievement is acknowledged in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents
- Positive Behaviour Support: The Dolphin Token and Learner Power certificate systems incentivise positive behaviour and are reinforced through assemblies and newsletters. These approaches foster student engagement and a culture of respect.
- Monitoring and Feedback: Regular learning walks focusing on School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support and Australian Education Research Organisaion routines allow leaders to observe classroom practices and provide staff feedback. Consistent routines, such as roll order lining up and transition protocols, support calm and predictable learning environments.

These strategies collectively foster a safe, inclusive, and engaging school environment where all students can thrive.

Targeted

- Targeted Support: The Student Wellbeing Tracker, counselling, Individual Education Plans, and collaboration with the School Chaplain and external agencies provide Tier 2 support for students with additional needs.
- Expanded Wellbeing Programs: The school has grown its counselling and chaplaincy services and partnered with external providers to support students' social-emotional development.
- Therapy and Story Dog Programs: Introduction of therapy dogs and the *Story Dogs* reading program support student emotional wellbeing and build literacy confidence in a calming environment.
- Skill-Building and Leadership: Programs such as *Social Stencil* (Years 4–5) and *PLAY* (Year 5) focus on developing social skills, peer leadership, and inclusive play, enhancing school culture and student connectedness.
- each year group has a Year Group Leader/Coordinator, a senior teacher responsible for their year, who monitor the health and wellbeing of students in their year, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support
- Koorie students are supported to engage fully in their education, in a positive learning environment that understands and appreciates the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.
- our English as a second language students are supported through our EAL program, and all cultural and linguistically diverse students are supported to feel safe and included in our school
- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from refugee background
- we provide a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQ+ and follow the Department's policy on LGBTIQ Student Support
- all students in Out of Home Care are supported in accordance with the Department's policy on Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care including being appointed a Learning Mentor, having an Individual Learning Plan and a Student Support Group (SSG) and being referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- students with a disability are supported to be able to engage fully in their learning and school activities in accordance with the Department's policy on Students with Disability, such as through reasonable adjustments to support access to learning programs, consultation with families and where required, student support groups and individual education plans
- wellbeing and health staff will undertake health promotion and social skills development in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff each year
- staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma
- students enrolled under the Department's international student program are supported in accordance with our legal obligations and Department policy and guidelines at: International Student Program

Individual

- *Student Support Groups*
- *Individual Education Plans*
- *Behaviour - Students*
- *Behaviour Support Plans*
- *Student Support Services*

as well as to other Department programs and services such as:

- Program for Students with Disabilities
- *Mental health toolkit*
- *headspace*
- LOOKOUT

Mentone Primary School implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These can include:
- building constructive relationships with students at risk or students who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances
- meeting with student and their parent/carer to talk about how best to help the student engage with school
- developing an Individual Learning Plan and/or a Behaviour Support Plan
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up
- referring the student to:
    o school-based wellbeing supports
    o Student Support Services
    o Appropriate external supports such as council-based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, headspace, child and adolescent mental health services or ChildFirst

Where necessary the school will support the student's family to engage by:
- being responsive and sensitive to changes in the student's circumstances and health and wellbeing
- collaborating, where appropriate and with the support of the student and their family, with any external allied health professionals, services or agencies that are supporting the student
- monitoring individual student attendance and developing an Attendance Improvement Plans in collaboration with the student and their family
- engaging with our regional Koorie Engagement Support Officers
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
    o with a disability
    o in Out of Home Care
    o and with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

4. Identifying students in need of support

Mentone Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. Classroom teachers, PLTs, the Student Wellbeing team, Wellbeing Coordinator and Principal Class all play a significant role in developing and implementing strategies help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Mentone Primary School will utilise the following information and tools to identify students in need of extra emotional, social or educational support:
- personal, health and learning information gathered upon enrolment and while the student is enrolled

- attendance records
- academic performance
- observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation
- attendance and suspension data
- engagement with families
- self-referrals or referrals from peers

5. Student rights and responsibilities

All members of our school community have a right to experience a safe and supportive school environment. We expect that all students, staff, parents and carers treat each other with respect and dignity. Our school's Statement of Values highlights the rights and responsibilities of members of our community.

Students have the right to:
- participate fully in their education
- feel safe, secure and happy at school
- learn in an environment free from bullying, harassment, violence, discrimination or intimidation
- express their ideas, feelings and concerns.

Students have the responsibility to:
- participate fully in their educational program
- display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and members of the school community
- respect the right of others to learn.

Students who may have a complaint or concern about something that has happened at school are encouraged to speak to their parents or carers and approach a trusted teacher or a member of the school leadership team. Further information about raising a complaint or concern is available in our Complaints Policy.

6. Student behavioural expectations and management

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school's Statement of Values/Student code of conduct.

Violence, bullying, and other offensive and harmful behaviours such as racism, harassment and discrimination will not be tolerated and will be managed in accordance with this policy. Bullying will be managed in accordance with our Bullying Prevention Policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Example School will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's policies on behaviour, discipline and student wellbeing and engagement. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.

Our school considers, explores and implement positive and non-punitive interventions to support student behaviour before considering disciplinary measures such as detention, withdrawal of privileges or withdrawal from class.

Disciplinary measures may be used as part of a staged response to inappropriate behaviour in combination with other engagement and support strategies to ensure that factors that may have contributed to the student's behaviour are identified and addressed. Disciplinary measures at our school will be applied fairly and consistently. Students will always be provided with an opportunity to be heard.

Disciplinary measures that may be applied include:
- warning a student that their behaviour is inappropriate
- teacher controlled consequences such as moving a student in a classroom or other reasonable and proportionate responses to misbehaviour
- withdrawal of privileges
- referral to the Year Level Coordinator
- restorative practices
- detentions
- behaviour support and intervention meetings
- suspension
- expulsion

Suspension, expulsion and restrictive interventions are measures of last resort and may only be used in situations consistent with Department policy, available at:
- https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/suspensions/policy
- https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/expulsions/policy
- https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/restraint-seclusion/policy

In line with Ministerial Order 1125, no student aged 8 or younger will be expelled without the approval of the Secretary of the Department of Education.

The Principal of Mentone Primary School is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES21.

Corporal punishment is prohibited by law and will not be used in any circumstances at our school.

7. Engaging with families

Mentone Primary School values the input of parents and carers, and we will strive to support families to engage in their child's learning and build their capacity as active learners. We aim to be partners in learning with parents and carers in our school community.

We work hard to create successful partnerships with parents and carers by:

- ensuring that all parents have access to our school policies and procedures, available on our school website
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents and staff, supported by our Communicating with School Staff policy.
- providing parent volunteer opportunities so that families can contribute to school activities
- involving families with homework and other curriculum-related activities
- involving families in school decision making

- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- including families in Student Support Groups and developing individual plans for students.

8. Evaluation

Mentone Primary School will collect data each year to understand the frequency and types of wellbeing issues that are experienced by our students so that we can measure the success or otherwise of our school-based strategies and identify emerging trends or needs.

Sources of data that will be assessed on an annual basis include:

- student survey data
- incident data
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

Mentone Primary School will also regularly monitor available data dashboards to ensure any wellbeing or engagement issues are acted upon in a timely manner and any intervention occurs as soon as possible.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website and Compass
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Included as annual reference in school newsletter
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

Our school will also ensure it follows the mandatory parent/carer notification requirements with respect to suspensions and expulsions outlined in the Department's policies at:

- Suspension process
- Expulsions - Decision

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

The following Department of Education and Training policies are relevant to this Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy:

MENTONE PRIMARY SCHOOL

- [Attendance](#)
- [Student Engagement](#)
- [Child Safe Standards](#)
- [Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care](#)
- [Students with Disability](#)
- [LGBTIQ Student Support](#)
- [Behaviour - Students](#)
- [Suspensions](#)
- [Expulsions](#)
- [Restraint and Seclusion](#)

The following school policies are also relevant to this Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy:
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	July 2025
Consultation	School Council, Newsletter
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	July 2027